



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

April 30, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell:

On April 27, 2018, the United States House of Representatives passed H.R. 4, FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018. As the Senate prepares to take up FAA reauthorization legislation, I urge you not to include language from the House bill that would effectively end the Metropolitan Council's designation as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Twin Cities region of Minnesota.

H.R. 4 will modify a statute relating to MPOs established prior to December 18, 1991, by now requiring local elected officials to serve on their governing boards. The Metropolitan Council has consisted of governor-appointed members since 1967 and has never had elected officials serve as members. In 1973, the Metropolitan Council was designated the MPO by the governor to meet the new federal requirement, because it was already serving the purpose of an MPO before they were federally required – to ensure the coordination of land use and transportation planning. In 1974, the state legislature also designated the Metropolitan Council as MPO in Minnesota state statute. The Metropolitan Council has properly and effectively served this function for 45 years, and amendment H.R. 4 would rescind this MPO model.

In 1974, the Minnesota State Legislature also created the TAB to align more closely with federal MPO requirements and guide the Metropolitan Council's transportation funding decisions. Elected officials play a powerful role in spending federal transportation money through the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). Today, the 34-member TAB consists of citizens and representatives of municipalities and counties, in fact, 18 of 34 members are elected officials. The TAB allocates the MPO's federal funds, and the Metropolitan Council's powers are limited to either concurrence or returning the decisions to TAB for reconsideration.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has grandfathered the Metropolitan Council's unique governance structure, as allowed under current law, for over 25 years. The Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration have also recently reaffirmed the Metropolitan Council's status.

I reiterate my request that the Senate exclude this damaging MPO provision from the Senate FAA reauthorization bill. Eliminating the Metropolitan Council's MPO status would trigger a lengthy redesignation process that would bring uncertainty about federally funded transportation projects in the Twin Cities, and circumvent a longstanding and productive process at a time when transportation investment is critical to our region.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Dayton", written over the printed name.

Mark Dayton
Governor

cc: Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senator Tina Smith